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Parade

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Q. Has America had any great women spies? I understand there was one American beauty who in World War II stole the Italian and French intelligence codes. Can you identify her? Also does our CIA train women agents?

—Louise Kugel, Chicago, Ill.

A. The American woman you have reference to is Amy Elizabeth Thorpe, born in 1910, daughter of a U.S. Marine Corps officer. Miss Thorpe had her first serious love affair at age 14, engaged in other affairs both in and out of marriage. In 1929 she married Arthur Pack, a secretary in the British embassy in Washington. Pack was much older than his wife, and when she gave birth to a son five months after their marriage, he quietly took the child from her and placed the infant for adoption in England. Subsequently Amy Pack took lovers in various countries. In 1937, while living in Poland and still technically married to Arthur Pack, she was recruited by British intelligence. From her Polish lover, she obtained both German and Polish military secrets, passed them along to the British who paid no attention to them. When World War II broke out, Sir William Stephenson, head of British secret intelligence in the U.S., employed Amy Pack in New York. He gave her the cover name, "Cynthia." She seduced several enemy foreign diplomats, obtained both the Vichy French and Italian naval codes. After World War II her husband died, and she married Charles Brousse, a press attaché in the Vichy embassy whom she had enrolled in her spy ring. They lived for a while in a Spanish castle, but in 1963 "Cynthia" died of cancer. She was considered one of the top British intelligence agents of all time. Our CIA will obtain information from women but as yet will not train any for field espionage duty.

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